

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 292317 TOSEC 120023

FOR THE SECRETARY AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY MOOSE

FOL RPT LAGOS 14170 ACTION SECSTATE 7 DEC 77 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 14170

DEPT PASS TO SECRETARY'S PARTY FOR SECRETARY AND DICK MOOSE

FROM AMBASSADOR MCHENRY AND PETTERSON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PDEV, WA

SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: OWEN'S SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER TALKS WITH SWAPO

1. DAVID OWEN WANTS THE CONTACT GROUP GO BACK TO LUANDA TO MEET WITH SAM NUJOMA. HE BASES THIS ON A MESSAGE FROM THE FRENCH CHARGE THERE WHO MET NUJOMA AT THE OPENING OF THE MPLA PARTY CONGRESS TWO DAYS AGO. NUJOMA INDICATED HE WANTED TO HEAR ABOUT OUR MEETING IN PRETORIA AND EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO MEET WITH US AGAIN. OWEN HAS ASKED US TO REMAIN IN LAGOS UNTIL HE CAN DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH YOU AND THE OTHER FOREIGN MINISTERS IN BRUSSELS.

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2. WE HAVE DISCUSSED OWEN'S REQUEST AMONG OURSELVES. THE GERMAN, CANADIAN AND WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND AGAINST OWEN'S SUGGESTION WE BELIEVE IT IS BASED ON AN OPTIMISTIC INTERPRETATION OF NUJOMA'S REQUEST. WE BELIEVE THAT NUJOMA HAS NOTHING NEW TO OFFER BUT IS SIMPLY CURIOUS ABOUT THE RESULTS OF THE PRETORIA TALKS. AS YOU KNOW, THOSE TALKS RESULTED IN LITTLE GIVE ON SOUTH AFRICA'S PART, AND IF THIS WAS CONVEYED TO NUJOMA NOW IT WOULD CONFIRM

SWAPO'S INCREASINGLY HELD VIEW THAT SOUTH AFRICA WANTS A SETTLEMENT THAT WOULD ENSURE SWAPO'S DEFEAT AND THAT FURTHER TALKS ARE USELESS. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF SWAPO HAD SOMETHING NEW TO TELL US WHICH WE MIGHT FACTOR INTO OUR CONSIDERATIONS, THIS COULD BE DONE THROUGH THE FRENCH CHARGE IN LUANDA OR OUR MISSIONS IN LUSAKA.

3. YOU SHOULD BE AWARE THAT THE OWEN'S PROPOSAL IS BASED ON AN ASSESSMENT OF THE TALKS WHICH WE DO NOT SHARE. THE ESSENCE OF OUR DIFFERENCES IS A) THE BRITISH INCLINATION TO SEE MORE MOVEMENT IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN POSITION THAN WE BELIEVE IS JUSTIFIED; AND B) THE BRITISH DISPOSITION EITHER TO PLACE THE BLAME FOR A POSSIBLE FAILURE OF THE TALKS ON SWAPO OR TO MAKE A CASE THAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR FAILURE SHOULD REST EQUALLY WITH SWAPO AND SOUTH AFRICA. BY DOING SO, THEY WOULD HOPE TO JUSTIFY OPPOSITION TO APPLYING ANY PRESSURES ON SOUTH AFRICA WHEN, INEVITABLY, THESE WOULD BE PROPOSED. WE AGREE THAT SWAPO HAS NOT MOVED FROM ITS POSITIONS ON THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOUTH AFRICA TROOPS AND ON POLITICAL PRISONERS.

HOWEVER, IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S POSITION IS CONSIDERABLY FURTHER FROM WHAT EITHER THE US OR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY COULD SUPPORT.

4. WE WILL BE PROVIDING A MORE EXTENSIVE ANALYSIS. THE CONTACT GROUP HAD SET OUT TO WRITE AN AGREED ASSESSMENT OF THE TALKS, BUT BECAUSE OF THE DIFFERENCES DISCUSSED ABOVE
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AND OTHER FACTORS, WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO COMPLETE THE JOINT ASSESSMENT. THE CONTACT GROUP PLANS TO TRY TO WORK THIS OUT IN NEW YORK.

5. SUBSTANTIVE FACTORS ASIDE, WE WOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY ARRANGING TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM LUANDA AND WOULD NEED ANOTHER EXCEPTION TO ANGOLA'S DECISION TO RESTRICT ENTRY DURING THE PARTY CONGRESS.

6. WE ARE SCHEDULED TO DEPART FOR AIRPORT AT 0500 TOMORROW MORNING FOR FLIGHT TO LONDON AND HENCE TO U.S. IF YOU AGREE WITH OUR RECOMMENDATION PARAGRAPH TWO WE WILL DEPART ON SCHEDULE. IF YOU DO NOT AGREE, WE ARE FULLY PREPARED TO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO MEET WITH NUJOMA IN LUANDA
EASUM

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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